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THE PROCESS LAB

The groundbreaking Process Lab engages visitors with activities that focus on the design process, emphasizing the role of experimentation in design thinking and making. The Process Lab offers immersive experiences for visitors of diverse ages and abilities, from families with small children to design students and professionals.

PROTOTYPING WITH LIGHT

The centerpiece of the Process Lab is a hands-on making station designed by Lindsey Adelman Studio. Visitors interact with the medium of light by attaching a selection of pre-cut materials (transparent gels, reflective surfaces, and translucent and perforated papers) to LED armatures. This dynamic display resembles a mechanical “garden” of light fixtures growing from the work surface, inspiring visitors to see light as a material they can actively shape and manipulate. Working with authentic building materials, visitors will experience the thrill of creating a prototype that has an immediate and direct impact on one of design’s most universal materials: light.

DESIGN IT BETTER

The products and environments around us can be improved through design thinking. Engaging with an 84-inch touch-screen table, visitors can propose new features and functions for everyday products, from a drinking fountain to a shopping cart, finding ways to make these objects more valuable to specific users. Empathy with the user and consideration of the user’s unique needs are at the heart of the design thinking process. The activity invites participants to share their own designs, view the ideas of past visitors, and vote for their favorite solutions.

POCKET BRAINSTORM

In a hands-on sketching activity, visitors can invent new products by creating mash-ups of small objects they are carrying with them, such as an eyeglass case and a money clip, or a key and a ballpoint pen. Visitors can share their ideas on a magnetic share wall and sketch additional concepts for “Wearable Technology” on a large-scale inspiration wall.

TESTING STATION

Why do so many versions of products exist? What makes one product better than another? A hands-on testing station invites visitors to touch and handle real-world design objects—water bottles, kitchen brushes, pill bottles, or product packages—and evaluate whether the designs are sustainable, user friendly, or desirable. This activity is designed to prompt conversation among visitors about the differences between everyday products.

3D PRINTING

The Process Lab space includes Andrew Carnegie’s former office, an exquisite room with views of the garden and Fifth Avenue, which showcases innovations in contemporary design practice. A large-scale 3D printer demonstrates the printing process using liquid plastic (SLA), and 3D-printed products and prototypes from cutting-edge companies are displayed



to show a cross section of how 3D printing is changing the way designers prototype, explore materials, and produce their work. Objects on view include a custom-made prosthetic limb, designed by Scott Summit/3D Systems; a lightweight airplane bracket from GE, designed to reduce fuel consumption; a breathable, sustainable architectural building component by Rael San Fratello; and a NIKE Vapor Carbon Elite cleat that premiered at the 2014 Super Bowl.

PROCESS CASE STUDIES

Objects in five cabinets on the perimeter of the gallery showcase rare prototypes alongside the final designs, which visitors can touch and experience. These objects, designed by IDEO, Quirky, Nick Richardson, MAP Projects, and Boym Partners, tell stories—about people, making, working, and history—and show how designers develop ideas through testing, prototyping, and finding inspiration in the world around them.

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